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### **Regents Chair Offers Review Of Year's Progress In Louisiana Higher Education**

BATON ROUGE - Board of Regents Chairman Richard D'Aquin closed out the monthly Regents meeting today with a review of the accomplishments in Louisiana higher education driven largely by the Board of Regents. Crediting the Master Plan and its ideals of increasing student access and student success as an important foundation for promoting "genuine social and economic progress for our state," D'Aquin noted that Louisiana's education community is making progress through collaborative efforts.

"This past fall some 100,000 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders across the state participated in the annual EPAS evaluation....that's up from 70,000 last year. EPAS is designed to help students make academic choices that will lead to success in their future education and occupational pursuits. The Board of Regents, with legislative support, funds this program and we believe it has great promise for our students.

"We have made excellent strides in gearing up for the full implementation of our Master Plan through our Noel-Levitz Enrollment Management Project. The project is helping our colleges and universities prepare to meet the challenges brought on by our new admissions criteria at all four-year institutions. Under the guidance of a campus-assigned expert, each of our two-year and four-year institutions is developing its own marketing, recruitment and retention plan, focused on student success. Our goal is to draw more students to our outstanding institutions and also improve retention and graduation rates -- important measures that reflect our accountability.

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“We’ve also, through Noel-Levitz, conducted market research, to better understand the educational needs and expectations of potential students, both in Louisiana and in surrounding states. This market research will be used to inform future recruitment efforts by our campuses. That, coupled with the results of our annual Student Satisfaction Survey, provide data that allows our campuses to better respond to the needs of students.

“In the important area of teacher education reform, thanks to the work of our campuses and guided by the Blue Ribbon Commission, it has been a year of transformation. First, we continue to improve the education of future teachers through the redesign of all undergraduate teacher education programs. As you will recall, we have already completed this task in the area of alternative certification. Our community and technical college system is engaged in the teacher education dialogue and we’re continuing to move forward in our efforts to strengthen our accountability system, which will ultimately measure both the quality and quantity of teachers produced.

“The Teacher Education Reform initiative is yet another example of the success of our ongoing partnership with Superintendent of Education Cecil Picard and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. My thanks to them for their continuing collaboration on the PK-16 approach to improving education at all levels in Louisiana.

“In fact, our partnership has been so successful that we continue to draw out-of-state accolades:

- Louisiana was one of only 5 states selected to participate in a Harvard program to design a national literacy model as part of President Bush’s “No Child Left Behind” legislation;
- We await a national publication highlighting Louisiana’s PK-16 efforts as a result of our state being selected by SHEEO as one of five for a case study on best practices in education collaboration.
- We are proud of the \$12.5 million federal GEAR UP grant we received that will target college preparation beginning at the middle school level. Our pilot schools will begin implementing the program next month.

“While we have been heavily involved in education reform, we have also worked a great deal in the area of economic development. We look forward to seeing the results of the bioscience and neurobioscience investments that this state has made in our institutions.

“Through our support fund, we continue to create campus environments that enable discovery and assist in drawing the great intellectual minds that are key to these research efforts. This

year, we traveled the state handing out over \$7 million in matching funds to create 77 new endowed professorships and 7 new endowed chairs at our institutions.

“We in Louisiana are showing many states how to ‘do distance education right.’ More and more these days, Board of Regents and campus staff are called upon to share lessons learned as high profile organizations in the field of electronic learning, such as the Pew Symposium and the Sloan Foundation, invite us to make presentations. Our institutions are running well under outstanding leaders who realize that our high calling is to fully educate students. In so doing, we can boast that our campuses are still considered a great financial bargain.

“Assisting us in keeping costs down is a true education governor and a supportive legislature, who have invested heavily in funding for education while other states have repeatedly cut their education budgets. We thank them for their support.

“So in this holiday season, as we take stock of all that is important to us - both on a personal level and in the many professional roles we play, I thought it important to thank all of you who make our work in education reform so meaningful and our return so promising - for the real gift that we can give to our great state is the promise of a quality education for all of our citizens and the wonderful social return that comes from investing in people through education. Thank you and Happy Holidays!”